

NEWS RELEASE

*OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS*

*RANDY G. MASSEY
ACTING UNITED STATES ATTORNEY*

Nine Executive Drive, Fairview Heights, Illinois 62208, Telephone (618) 628-3700

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BELLEVILLE WOMAN SENTENCED TO 21 MONTHS FOR MAIL AND WIRE FRAUD

DARLENE SMALLWOOD of Belleville, Illinois, was sentenced Monday on one count of **MAIL FRAUD** and ten counts of **WIRE FRAUD**. **SMALLWOOD** was sentenced to a term of 21 months' imprisonment and ordered her to pay \$167,604.06 in restitution to her former employer, the accounting firm of Kerber, Eck, and Braeckel, LLP ("KEB").

SMALLWOOD was employed as a payroll manager and was responsible for making payments to state unemployment and income taxing authorities for KEB client companies and their employees. In July, 2006, **SMALLWOOD** pled guilty to an eleven-count Indictment and admitted to stealing from KEB clients by taking money intended for state taxing authorities. **SMALLWOOD** used both mail and interstate wire communications in the thefts. Two days before KEB terminated **SMALLWOOD**'s employment, **SMALLWOOD** entered the business late at night and deleted hundreds of computer records linking her to the thefts.

At the sentencing, a partner in charge of KEB's Belleville Office told the Court that the deletion of records required that the company laboriously reconstruct **SMALLWOOD**'s thefts. The Court was advised that the man-hours dedicated to this task were equivalent to hiring one employee for a year.

The investigation was conducted by the United States Postal Inspection Service and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The prosecution of the case was handled by Assistant United States Attorney Kevin F. Burke.